9 FAM PART IV Appendix D,
400 IVACS (IMMIGRANT VISA APPLICANT CONTROL SYSTEM)

(TL:VISA-267;   04-25-2001)

9 FAM 401 FUNCTIONS

(TL:VISA-119;   7-3-95)

IVACS provides automated assistance in managing and controlling immigrant visa applications. (The term "immigrant visa application" as used in this section includes nonimmigrant fiancé(e) visa applications.) IVACS processing begins with the initial registration of a case and continues through the final interview and issuance or refusal of the visa. IVACS does not alter the basic steps of immigrant visa processing; it does, however, automate much of the repetitive work involved.

9 FAM 402 UTILITY

(TL:VISA-267;   04-25-2001)

IVACS replaces immigrant visa control cards (Form OF-224 and Form OF-224B) with computerized data files. The system edits data as *it is* entered, updates the automated files, and calculates statistics. IVACS automatically performs other immigrant visa processes, including preparing transmittal letter packets, requesting CLASS clearances, producing FBI and DSL-825 clearance memoranda, generating required statistical reports, managing numerical control functions, recording discrete actions taken in a case, and printing the immigrant visa. [For specific machine entries to accomplish these tasks see the IVACS Reference Manual.]

9 FAM 403 IVACS RECORDS

9 FAM 403.1 Case Identification

(TL:VISA-267;   04-25-2001)

When an approved petition or other acceptable evidence showing that the principal applicant qualifies for an immigrant visa status is received, it should be entered promptly in IVACS. An entered IVACS record is referred to as a case, which is identified by a unique number automatically, *and* assigned by the system at the time of its original entry.

9 FAM 403.2 Related Manual Files

(TL:VISA-119;   7-3-95)

Form OF-224, Form OF-224B, and the associated consolidated card index file are replaced by the automated IVACS file. The A-Z file, however, consisting of documents needed to support each visa case, must be maintained according to existing manual procedures.

9 FAM 403.3 Contents

(TL:VISA-119;   7-3-95)

Each IVACS case consists of a record of an alien entitled to visa status (the principal applicant) and of all applicants whose status is derived from a defined relationship to the principal applicant. The computer stores both data which apply to the case in general and data which are unique to each individual applicant, distinguished by separate case data and applicant data records. "Case data" include all the immigrant visa processing information common to all applicants in the case. "Applicant data" are those personal and biographic factors unique to each applicant.

9 FAM 404 NUMERICAL CONTROL

(TL:VISA-119;   7-3-95)

IVACS performs the following functions relating to immigrant visa numerical controls:

(1) Records documentarily qualified cases and prepares the monthly report to the Department;

(2) Stores current qualifying and cutoff dates;

(3) Checks new qualifying and cutoff dates against pending cases to generate packet 3 cover letters and lists of applicants ready for appointment, respectively; and

(4) Maintains the visa authorization file. [See the IVACS Reference Manual for the specific steps involved.]

9 FAM 405 SCHEDULING

(TL:VISA-119;   7-3-95)

IVACS provides information to assist in scheduling applicants for appointments and retrieves and prepares documentation in preparation for the appointment. All IVACS scheduling functions are on the IVACS Scheduling Menu. [See IVACS Reference Manual.]

9 FAM 406 OTHER IVACS FEATURES

(TL:VISA-119;   7-3-95)

A special feature of IVACS assists in recording information of interest in cases that are not yet entitled to status. IVACS also includes a recall capability for retrieving cases on predetermined dates and provides space for recording narrative remarks pertinent to the case.

9 FAM 406.1 Provisional Case

(TL:VISA-119;   7-3-95)

Information about a prospective immigrant not entitled to status is normally not entered in IVACS. The consular officer may, however, create a provisional case to get a head start on processing or for lookout purposes, if a petition is expected to be filed in the near future.

9 FAM 406.2 Recall Feature

(TL:VISA-119;   7-3-95)

A date entered in the Recall Date Field will automatically trigger a reminder to permit review or further action.

9 FAM 406.3 IVACS Ad Hoc Inquiry (IVIQ)

(TL:VISA-119;   7-3-95)

IVIQ is a powerful transaction that allows users to search the data files for information of interest. Posts may use IVIQ to examine all cases with similar characteristics; for example, the same attorney, same petitioner, same classification or nationality, etc. This feature has considerable utility for anti-fraud efforts and section management.

9 FAM 406.4 Remarks Field

(TL:VISA-119;   7-3-95)

The remarks field in the IVACS case record provides space to enter important or unusual considerations for an immigrant visa case.

9 FAM 407 IVACS Management

(TL:VISA-267; 04-25-2001)

a. IVACS was designed to meet the needs of immigrant visa posts worldwide and programmed to conform with immigrant visa procedures and regulations. Nevertheless, because of the diversity of conditions at posts, a certain amount of flexibility is built into IVACS management procedures. The following guidelines can assist posts in establishing local procedures to safeguard system requirements and to ensure that *U.S.* consular managers retain control of automated IV processing.

b. The *U.S.* consular managers should assign and periodically review the IVACS systems access levels to ensure that the appropriate staff retain*s* access only to those programs necessary to perform their particular tasks. All access level changes must be coordinated with the post systems manager through the IV Unit Chief.

9 FAM 407.1 IVACS Management Reports

(TL:VISA-267; 04-25-2001)

a. IVACS automatically generates five management reports each day to assist consular officers in supervising immigrant visa staff work. These reports can help to prevent malfeasance and ensure quality control in the immigrant visa process. Distribution of these reports should be restricted to the computer system manager, appropriate consular officers, and the FSN IVACS coordinator. The responsible consular officer must review the following reports daily:

(1) Exception Report 1 lists changes or deletions to critical fields in the case record and indicates what was changed, who made the change, and the time the change was made. The reviewing officer can then verify all modifications to critical immigrant visa data.

(2) Exception Report 2 lists cases and/or applicant records deleted from the IVACS database. Evidence of possible misuse of the IVACS system could appear in this report. In addition, the case printout would allow reentry of the data if the deletion was accidental.

(3) Exception Report 3 lists limited-access transactions completed during the day, including the entering or modification of qualifying or cutoff dates. This information permits the reviewing officer to verify that only authorized transactions have been made.

(4) Exception Report 4 lists critical fields for all cases created during the current processing day. It is extremely important for quality control, and consular officers should carefully review it, particularly during the database building phase of IVACS.

b.   After daily review of the exception reports, the *U.S.* consular manager may wish to retain selected reports for a period of time in response to specific post needs. Although the reports are unclassified, they should be secured when not in use.

9 FAM 407.2 IVACS Hours of Operation

(TL:VISA-119;   7-3-95)

The computer system manager must schedule time each day to perform necessary housekeeping tasks and to complete the End-of-Day reports. The system manager and the immigrant visa unit should agree on the hours that IVACS will be in operation. Ideally, the system maintenance should be scheduled for after hours, so that the visa staff has access to the computer during normal working hours.

9 FAM 407.3 Personnel

(TL:VISA-119;   7-3-95)

The following duties should be assigned to specific individuals.

The post may be flexible in assigning tasks, but should give special consideration when assigning security-related duties. At small posts these duties may be consolidated, but the arrangement must always provide a backup so that essential duties are not neglected during leaves.

9 FAM 407.3-1 IVACS Control Officer

(TL:VISA-119;   7-3-95)

The IVACS control officer should be a consular officer with immigrant visa experience. The officer's responsibilities include:

(1) Determining appropriate access levels for operators using the IVACS program;

(2) Monitoring the daily management reports and ensuring that all entries on these reports are authorized and correct;

(3) Ensuring that old or unneeded printouts are properly burned or shredded; and

(4) Ensuring that the integrity of the password system is maintained and requesting the computer systems manager to change any password that has been compromised.

9 FAM 407.3-2 IVACS Coordinator

(TL:VISA-119;   7-3-95)

An FSN with extensive immigrant visa experience should be designated as IVACS coordinator. The coordinator's responsibilities include:

(1) Maintaining liaison with the system manager on computer equipment needs or problems;

(2) Guiding the database building;

(3) Arranging cross training for staff members;

(4) Running the Beginning-of-Day procedure;

(5) Coordinating the End-of-Day and backup procedures with the systems manager;

(6) Updating the post holiday schedule;

(7) Acting as alternate to the IVACS reports control coordinator; and

(8) Reviewing exception reports and gathering documentation to substantiate the recorded changes.

9 FAM 407.3-3 IVACS Reports Control Coordinator

(TL:VISA-119;   7-3-95)

A key FSN with complete immigrant visa-processing knowledge should be designated as the IVACS reports control coordinator. The coordinator's responsibilities include:

(1) Requesting IVACS reports;

(2) Maintaining a log of the time periods covered by each report and of the number of copies required;

(3) Collecting and distributing reports (other than the management reports described in 9 FAM PART IV Appendix D, 407.1) on a daily basis;

(4) Updating cutoff dates and visa authorizations on a monthly basis;

(5) Scheduling visa appointments, using IVACS Scheduling Menu (SCHD) or IVACS End-of-Day Menu;

(6) Coordinating the production of monthly and annual reports with the FSN system operator;

(7) Forwarding the diskette reporting qualified demand (created by Command C469) and a printout to the Department for CA/VO/F/I; and

(8) Acting as alternate IVACS coordinator.

9 FAM 407.3-4 Printer Operation

(TL:VISA-119;   7-3-95)

One FSN should have primary responsibility for loading paper and Form OF-155A into the printers.

9 FAM 407.4 Building the Data Base

(TL:VISA-119;   7-3-95)

All information from existing immigrant visa control cards and all new cases must be entered into the IVACS database before the system can be fully utilized. Normally, the post hires temporary personnel to enter Form OF-224 control cards information into the system, a process termed "database building," and regular FSN staff enter all new cases as they are received. The parallel manual card system must be maintained until 2 months after the database building is completed to permit reconciliation of IVACS with manual statistics and procedures. At the time IVACS is installed, CA/VO provides the post with detailed instructions for database building.